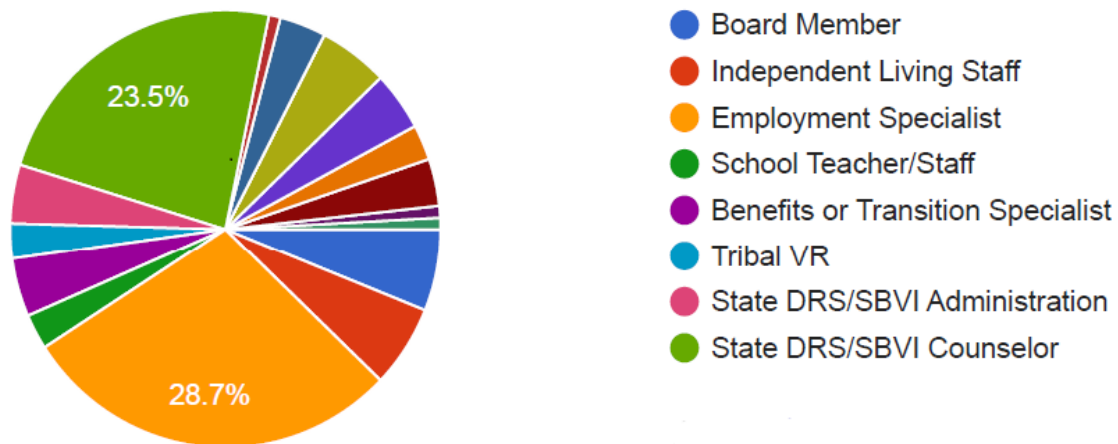


2025 Fall Conference Evaluation Summary

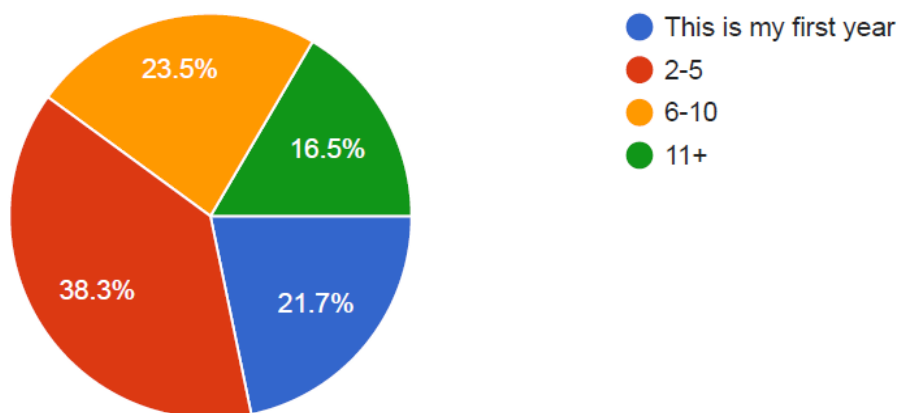
Please check the title listed below that best describes you

115 responses



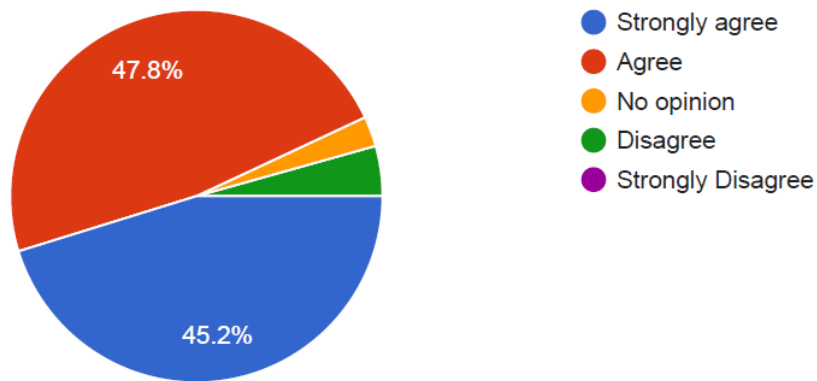
How many years have you attended the Fall Conference?

115 responses



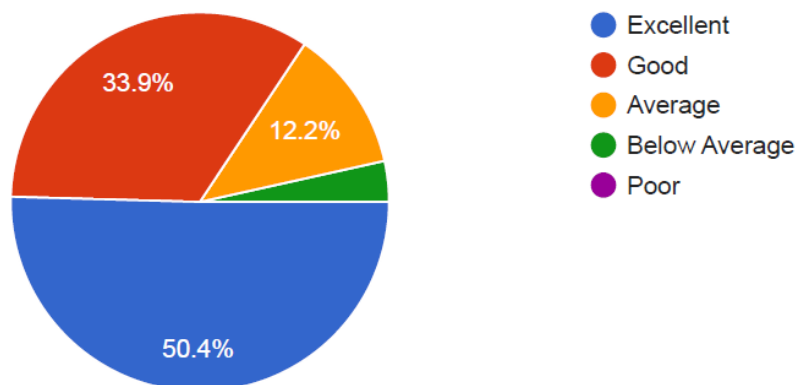
The information presented at this year's Fall Conference was useful and relevant to my job

115 responses



What did you think of this year's Fall Conference

115 responses



Fall Conference Evaluations

2025 Fall Conference Evaluation Details	Average of Rating	Estimated Attendance
Day 1: Opening Keynote & General Session (1:30-5:00 PM)		
Dr. Gregory Lester: People Who Challenge Us: Understanding Personality Disorders (Part 1)	4.61	213
Dr. Gregory Lester: People Who Challenge Us: Understanding Personality Disorders (Part 2)	4.61	202
Day 2: Breakout Sessions (8:30 - 10:00 AM)		
Dr. Trevor Manthey: Trauma Informed Care: Creating Safe & Empowering Environments	3.96	51
Ashlea Lantz & Tricia Jones-Parkin: Technology & Artificial Intelligence	3.00	63
Jana Burke: Business Benefits of Disability Inclusion	3.67	46
Dr. Gregory Lester: Homelessness & Addiction	4.81	50
Day 2: Breakout Sessions (10:30 AM - Noon)		
Dr. Trevor Manthey: Motivational Interviewing: Guiding Change with Compassion	4.67	34
Ashlea Lantz: Beyond Compliance: Navigating CRC Ethics in a Changing World	3.79	27
Employment Disability Resources: Valued Voices: Experiences of Individuals with Disabilities in the Workplace	4.88	48
Dr. Gregory Lester: Homelessness & Addiction (Repeat Session)	4.41	78
Jana Burke: Self-Advocacy @ Work	4.73	21
Day 2: Luncheon		
Parker Hanson: Rise Above, No Excuses	4.36	208
Day 2: General Session (1:30 - 3:00 PM)		
Joel Sylvester: Bridging the Gap: Advocating and Advancing Disability Employment in the Modern Technology Age	3.52	202
Day 2: Breakout Sessions (3:30 - 5:00 PM)		
Dr. Trevor Manthey: Stronger Together: Team Building for Resilience	4.70	19
Ashlea Lantz: Value Proposition of VR	4.00	2
Call to Freedom: Identifying & Working with Victims of Human Trafficking	4.32	53
Disability Determination Services: Social Security Disability: Myths, Modernization, and Effective Advocacy	3.43	53
Jana Burke: Neurodiversity in the Workplace	3.98	82
Day 3: Breakout Sessions (8:30 - 9:30 AM)		
SD Department of Social Services: Money Follows the Person Rebrand	3.40	19
Andrea Heronimus: Services and Resources Within the Publicly Funded Behavioral Health System	3.58	86
Tricia Jones-Parkin: Community of Practice: Exploring the Opportunities and Responsibilities of AI in Employment Services	3.57	27
Ashley Zimmer-Larsen: Art Therapy	4.48	40
Ben May: Additional Support for Patient and Clients	4.14	27
Closing Keynote		
Amberley Snyder: Little Moments	4.81	196

Rating Scale: 1 - Poor to 5 - Excellent

Total Attendance	219
Survey Responses	115

What did you think of this year's Fall Conference?

Overall Impressions

- The conference was very well organized, engaging, and motivational.
 - Participants appreciated the variety and relevance of sessions offered.
 - Many said it was difficult to choose sessions because there were so many valuable options.
 - The positive and uplifting atmosphere was noted by several attendees.
-

Speakers & Presentations

- Keynote speakers were repeatedly mentioned as the highlight of the conference.
 - Dr. Greg Lester received extensive praise for being *informative, thought-provoking, humorous, and engaging*.
 - Amberley Snyder was described as *inspirational and powerful*.
 - Trevor Manthey's and Jana Burke's sessions were seen as *interactive, practical, and relevant*.
 - The motivational and disability-focused sessions resonated strongly with attendees.
-

Content & Learning

- Participants valued:
 - Practical, applicable information they could use with clients.
 - Diverse session topics (AI, ethics, art therapy, disability advocacy, counseling skills, etc.).
 - Networking opportunities and the chance to connect in person.
 - The balance of professional development and inspiration.
-

Activities & Extras

- The Paint & Sip and art-themed elements (like coloring pages) were fun and helped engagement.
 - Many liked networking opportunities and the inclusion of vendors/exhibitors.
-

Suggestions / Constructive Feedback

- Several participants suggested shortening breakout sessions from 1.5 hours to 1 hour.
 - Some wanted more physical or interactive sessions (e.g., yoga, relaxation techniques).
 - Overall, attendees expressed interest in keeping the variety and motivational focus for future events.
-

Top Mentions

- Dr. Greg Lester
- Amberley Snyder
- Trevor Manthey
- Jana Burke
- Parker Hanson
- Paint & Sip activity

Do you have any suggestions for social events?

Accessibility & Space

- Top concern: Accessibility for attendees using wheelchairs or mobility devices.
 - Table spacing was too tight, especially in the Washington Room after lunch.
 - Many participants using wheelchairs were forced to sit in the back corner without tables, making it hard to take notes or engage.
 - Recommendation: Designate accessible tables and wider aisles in every session.
-

Social Event Feedback

- The “Sip and Paint” activity was a *major success* — mentioned by dozens as *fun, creative, and relaxing*.
 - A few suggested more guidance/instruction during painting for non-artistic attendees.
 - Several want it to continue next year.
-

Ideas for Future Social Activities

Attendees suggested expanding options to encourage networking and fun, such as:

- Interactive games: Trivia, Family Feud, scavenger hunt, escape room (especially tabletop versions).
 - Team-building activities and ways to mix people from different districts.
 - Game or casino nights: Poker, blackjack, bingo, cornhole, or bean bag tournaments.
 - Comedy or performance events: Comedians (e.g., Josh Blue, Tina Friml), dueling pianos, lip-sync contests, improv shows.
 - Creative or craft activities: Origami, slime-making, puzzle challenges, art nights.
 - Physical / experiential options: Goat yoga, axe throwing, short volunteer or community service projects.
 - Networking mixers: Casual meetups or brewery/wine tastings.
 - Some participants preferred no evening events, noting fatigue after full conference days.
-

Networking & Inclusion

- Several attendees asked for activities that mix participants from different districts to promote statewide connections.
 - Suggestions included:
 - Pre-conference sign-ups to form mixed-district activity groups.
 - More interactive, team-based events to encourage engagement beyond one’s usual coworkers.
-

Other Suggestions

- Make speaker slides accessible digitally for attendees with low vision.
 - Include more sessions for Job Specialists (practical training, Q&A panels with experienced staff).
 - Consider shorter breakout sessions and more variety of session types.
-

Overall Tone

- The majority of respondents enjoyed the event and social opportunities.
- Feedback emphasized accessibility, variety, and interactivity — with a strong interest in maintaining creative, inclusive, and engaging experiences for all attendees.

Do you have topic or speaker suggestions for future conferences or trainings?

Overall Themes

Respondents expressed enthusiasm for continuing motivational, mental health, and disability-centered content, while suggesting more practical, skill-based, and interactive sessions.

There was a strong desire for shorter, more engaging sessions and new speaker perspectives, including employers, youth, and local professionals.

1. Mental Health, Personality Disorders, & Trauma

- The most common topic requested was *mental health* — including:
 - Working with individuals with personality disorders, trauma, addiction, suicidal ideation, or extreme symptoms.
 - Practical, hands-on strategies for applying what's learned (e.g., from Dr. Lester's sessions).
 - Dementia and aging topics (mentions of *Teepa Snow*-style sessions).
 - Youth mental health and how to support students lacking strong home or school support.
 - Resilience, motivation, and mindset for professionals working in challenging environments.
-

2. Technology, AI & Assistive Tools

- High interest in AI-related presentations, including:
 - How to use AI for billing, documentation, and efficiency.
 - AI and assistive technology in disability services and smart home applications.
 - Ethical considerations and real-world applications of technology in VR counseling.
-

3. Employment, Employers & Business Partnerships

- Multiple calls for sessions featuring employers' perspectives — what works, what doesn't, and how VR services benefit them.
 - Requests for real business case examples or local business speakers (e.g., mayors, HR leaders).
 - Suggested focus:
 - Building employer collaborations.
 - Supporting clients with disabilities or criminal histories to gain and retain employment.
 - Helping job specialists with engagement and communication strategies.
-

4. Interactive & Wellness-Focused Sessions

- Participants want more interactive and movement-based sessions, such as:
 - Chair yoga, breathing, mindfulness, art therapy, music therapy.
 - Physical breakout options for stretching and energy renewal.
 - Suggestion: Keep sessions 1 hour instead of 1.5 hours and add short breaks between sessions.
-

5. Speaker Suggestions (Named Individuals)

Popular or requested speakers included:

- Dr. Greg Lester (returning favorite).
- Kristin Scroggin – generational communication and workforce topics.
- Josh Sundquist, Josh Blue, Tina Friml – motivational speakers/comedians with disabilities.
- Jill Moore White, John Kriesel, Justin Skeesuck & Patrick Gray (*I'll Push You*).
- Michael Dalto, Danny Coombs, Brent Poppen, Dr. Kerry Magro, Kellie Poulsen-Grill, Sam Seavey, Becca Meyers.
- Requests for local presenters and VR staff to share expertise.

6. Accessibility & Inclusion Topics

- Continued interest in accessibility awareness, assistive devices, and universal design.
- Attendees emphasized the need to translate passion into practical action—ensuring accessible venues, materials, and hotel accommodations.

7. Structural & Logistical Suggestions

- Shorter sessions (60–75 minutes).
- More networking time and space to visit vendors.
- Add first-timer orientation sessions.
- Offer digital access to slides for attendees with visual impairments.
- Avoid amphitheater seating for note-taking comfort.
- Consider earlier end times one day to allow attendees to check work messages or travel.

8. Continuing Interests

- Keep strong focus on:
 - Motivational speakers with disabilities
 - Personal and professional growth
 - Workforce wellness and neurodiversity
 - Real-life stories and success journeys